

The recent National Educational Television program on the President's state of the Union address is such a case. While the state of the Union message probably cannot be categorized as a classic "controversial topic," it is one about which people hold strong feelings. And this year, as it did last, NET presented over the educational stations of this country a couple of hours of discussion on the address immediately afterwards.

The people who discussed it held various views and represented various positions. In the end, the viewer was treated to the President making his address, with all the impact of such a ceremonial occasion—and this was followed by judicious and sometimes impassioned reaction from prominent Americans from several cities across the Nation who both agreed and disagreed with the contents of the address.

This new trend is going a little further; in fact, it is going directly to the public which watches these programs. The educational stations in Boston and Philadelphia and other cities have done this, and very shortly my own station here in Washington will be doing it.

This extension of the "instant fairness" trend is to follow a program concerning a controversial subject not only with informed comment by people who agree and disagree on the subject, but also by response from viewers via the telephone. Viewers who have had a strong reaction to the program—for or against—can call in and talk with the people who have commented on the program.

The public's opinion, in effect, is immediately expressed. The result is not only a solid in-depth treatment of a subject with a variety of views, but it also is an involvement of the local community in an important issue, and this is what a public television station can do and should be doing.

As a producer of programs in a local educational television station, this new form of, as Mr. Harley says, "presenting opposing conflicting viewpoints on controversial issues" is something I regard as worthwhile and valuable.

Mr. Harley makes a point that he does not feel "the Fairness Doctrine to date has been a substantial inhibiting force." But he expressed fear that it might potentially curtail controversial programing. I agree that it has not, in my experience, been a substantially inhibiting force in the creation of programs.

I also agree that the doctrine's potential for curtailing controversial programing must be guarded against. At present, and with what limited vision I have into the future, however, it does not appear to me to be any threat to free and constructive programing.

As for Mr. Harley's remarks about educational stations and the privilege of editorializing, here I agree also. This subcommittee surely has heard more argument pro and con on this subject than I have even thought of. But for what it is worth. I feel my station should have an opportunity to editorialize if it wants to. This would not, I think, include endorsements of political candidates.

I do not know if we ever would present editorials if we had the option. It is a profoundly serious area for a station and especially a public television station intimately involved in the community. Such editorials, if aired, would have to be given the utmost thought.

But right now we do not have that option and it seems to me that, in the interest of fairness to educational stations, in the interest of an